

Deuteronomy 30 - Thursday, December 29th, 2011

(1) "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, (2) and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, (3) that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. (4) If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. (5) Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

- Notice two key words; when and then. When all these things come to pass, and they return to the Lord, then He will bring them back to the land.
- This promise was, and even now is, profoundly prophetic related to the nation of Israel, and was partially fulfilled during the Babylonian captivity.
- It is ultimately fulfilled during both this, and the last century as God now gathers them from the farthest parts under heaven to possess their land.

- Couple of thoughts here before we move one. First, is this "when - then" principle and promise not true for me and you? "When we, then God!"
- When we return to the Lord, then we possess the promises of the Lord. Our problem is that we suffer needlessly and delay this unnecessarily.
- Why do we, like the prodigal son, have to go through difficulty and experience pain, even losing everything, before we will return to the Lord?

Luke 15:11-24 NIV Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. (12) The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. (13) "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. (14) After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. (15) So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. (16) He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. (17) "When [WHEN] he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! (18) I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. (19) I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' (20) So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. (21) "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (22) "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. (23) Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. (24) For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

- Perhaps you'll indulge me a bit longer as I take this a step further because there's a most powerful principle woven into the fabric of this chapter.
- Here it is; it's been said that "when" we change our mind, then God will "change" our heart. We see this with the prodigal coming to his senses.
- So too do we see this with the Israelites coming to their senses. When they change their minds then God has permission to change their hearts.

(6) And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

- Here, Moses tells them that God will circumcise their hearts, and in so doing, they will love Him with all their heart and soul that they may live.
- This one verse, in this obscure chapter, in what would arguably be an often-skipped book in the Old Testament, has "the" key to loving the Lord.
- Let me explain, the "how" of loving God, is found in the power of the person of the Holy Spirit, without Whom we will never bear the fruit of love.

- You may recall a while back in our study in the book of Romans chapter two where we learned what it means to have a heart that's circumcised.
- Simply put, it's a cutting away of the flesh. "When" the flesh is cut away from the heart, then, and only then, will I love the Lord with all my heart.
- In other words, in and of myself, I am incapable of obeying the Lord, and loving the Lord with all my heart, absent the circumcision of my heart.

- This is why I believe, Deuteronomy 30:6 holds the key as it relates to the "how" of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to do the "what" of the Holy Word.
- I can never hope to live a life of obedience to the Lord, let alone have that love for the Lord, if I'm trying to do it in the energy of my own flesh.
- This may explain, though not excuse, why we need look no further for the reason many of us never enter in and possess the promises of God.

- Here's what I'm thinking; when I come to my senses, change my mind, then God will change my heart, by cutting away the flesh from my heart.
- When God cuts the flesh away from my heart He gives me a new heart. He puts a new spirit within me, which enables me to love and obey Him.
- This is a prophecy concerning Israel as a nation, and it's a promise concerning us as a believer. Consider this passage in Ezekiel's prophecy:

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

(7) "Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. (8) And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that they would again obey God when He put's the curses on their enemies.
- The reason I find this interesting is because it would seem to indicate that God's promises are multi-tasked, and even multi-layered, if you will.
- While God blesses and prospers us, He also simultaneously curses our enemies before us, which makes it more of a curse for those against us.

Psalms 23:3-6 NKJV (3) He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. (4) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

(9) The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, (10) if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

- It's important to understand that for Israel, there's a prophetic component to this that is yet future, in that this has only been fulfilled in part.
- While many of the Jewish people are now back in their land, there's coming a time when all of Israel will return to the land and possess the land.
- One thought is that this will ultimately and finally find it's fulfillment at the second coming of Christ, and subsequently on into the millennial reign.

(11) "For this commandment which I command you today *is* not *too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. (12) It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' (13) Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' (14) But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

- What Moses is saying is that God would never be so cruel as to command us to do something that's too mysterious, or unreachable to do.
- Not only is it within our reach, it's within our heart. It's almost as if God is letting us in on how He's preset us, and even pre-wired us to love Him.
- Actually, the Apostle Paul echo's this and quotes this very passage in order to reinforce how it's within all our hearts, to confess with our mouth.

Romans 10:6-13 NKJV But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' " (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) (7) or, " 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). (8) But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): (9) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. (13) For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED."

(15) "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, (16) in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

- At the risk of complicating the simplicity of this, I see in this, an interesting contrasting similarity, paradoxically. Now, let me explain what I mean.
- There's a similarity with the Israelites choosing between life and death under the Old Covenant, and us choosing Jesus in the New Covenant.
- However, there's a paradox in that, for them it was based on what they did for God, whereas under grace it's what God has already done for us.

- Several Facebook friends posted a graphic contrasting this paradoxical similarity between Religion and the Gospel.
- Religion says if I obey, I'm accepted, whereas the Gospel says, I'm accepted so I obey.
- Religion says if I'm good, God will love me, whereas the Gospel says I'm bad and Jesus loves bad people.
- Religion says people are either good or bad, whereas the Gospel says that people are either repentant or not.
- Religion says the focus is on what I do or don't do, whereas the Gospel says the focus is on what Jesus did.
- Religion says that what will be produced is pride and despair, whereas the Gospel says it's humility and confidence.
- Religion says the motivation is fear, whereas the Gospel says the motivation is love.

(17) But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, (18) I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. (19) I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; (20) that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

- This most amazing chapter ends with Moses admonishing them to make the right choice, and choose life over death, and blessing over cursing.
- If they were to make the right choice, which would seem to be a firm grasp of the obvious that they would choose life, they would also love God.
- This is where, and how, I would like to close in the remainder of our time tonight. There is an inextricable link between loving and obeying God.

1 John 5:3 NIV This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

Mark 12:28-31 NIV One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" (29) "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. (30) Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' (31) The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."